

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

The ICPR (Interactive Children's Program for Reading) is an intensified, sight-word program, reading program taught to grade-one students daily by twelve staff members.

This "Team of Twelve" staff members enter the grade-one department and teach reading for approximately one-half hour each day. As there are only 53 students in the first grade and twelve staff members on the team, the student to staff ratio is extremely low. The program has proven to be very effective. Every Wednesday the "Team of Twelve" meets to discuss the progress, realign groups, share materials and chart the students' growth.

The objectives for the program include:

- to recognize the first hundred words from the Instant Words List
- to recognize the first hundred words in context reading
- to use the first hundred words in the writing process
- to develop fluency and automaticity in reading
- to build self-esteem, confidence, and independence in reading and the writing process

This program is innovative because we use the resources at our disposal in order to create a positive student-teacher ratio where it is virtually impossible for a student's reading problems to go unnoticed. There is no additional cost for this program. Our "ICPR" staff include two speech therapists, three special education teachers, two basic skills teachers, one enrichment teacher, one teacher assistant, and three first grade classroom teachers. These people were on staff prior to the inception of the program. No additional hiring was necessary.

All students are assessed using the *Instant Words List* from The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists by Prentice Hall and the Emergent Literacy Survey from the Early Success Reading Program. The survey assesses the child's knowledge of Rhyming Recognition, Beginning Sound Recognition, Blending Onsets and Rimes, Concepts, including Concepts of Print, Letter Naming, Word Recognition, Word Writing, and Sentence Dictation. The children are then broken into twelve groups. Students who struggle to identify their letters are put in groups of 2 to 3. Students who are more advanced are in groups of five or six. The ICPR Staff meet with students four days a week for the first half hour of the morning. On the fifth morning, the ICPR Team meets to discuss the progress of the children, share teaching strategies, and any problems that may have occurred during the week.

The concept of interactive, small-group instruction had its roots in our school beginning in the year 1998/99. We felt that being a small, rural, farming community, with mostly "stay-at-home moms", our students entered kindergarten without the benefits of nursery school or day-care experiences. We had an extremely wide range of learners, beginning with students struggling to recognize their ABCs to students who were reading beyond a first-grade level.

High student reading achievement was promoted through daily, consistent instruction for fluency and automaticity; students increased their rate of reading and began to utilize context clues for comprehension. By June of 2000, the children were better able to interact with text and use textual materials as a tool for learning. We realized that student achievement was being affected by this practice and decided to expand upon it. Because of the apparent success of these instructional strategies, it was decided to implement this intensive program for all grade one students in the fall of 2000.

2. List specific Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards, addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.

Our "ICPR" is highly supportive of the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards. Students are motivated to read, to value books, to think critically and to problem solve (Standard 3.3.15). It demonstrates how language is used for different reasons and encourages student to use their language skills in functional and realistic ways.

Children in ICPR are encouraged to talk about what they have read (Standard 3.1). This approach helps students better understand what they have read and enables them to speak to a variety of purposes and audiences.

The ICPR Team encourages students to actively listen to a variety of situations (Standard 3.2). During these sessions all first graders are engaged in meaningful conversations about everyday activities, the past, present, and the future.

Reading and writing are two skills that are closely connected. Students in ICPR write daily about their readings (Standard 3.3). Writing, in turn, contributes to the development of phonics, spelling, word recognition, memory and reading comprehension.

The basis for judging reading ability is not word recognition or phonic skills, but the child's capacity to make meaning out of what he/she has read. Because they are all in small groups students are encouraged to make sense of their readings (Standard

3.4). Children in ICPR are given the opportunity to read chapter and trade-books not just grade-level text. These books encourage higher order thinking, not just recall of simple information. Through this program students have begun to use a variety of information, technology and other tools (Standard 1.2). The small sizes of the groups gives students opportunities to exhibit effective interpersonal skills (Standard 1.1). Media and library materials are implemented as well (Standard 1.3). The small grouping gives students more opportunities to apply problem solving skills during the games and activities that are played.

As the lessons progress and students are assessed, teachers are able to set long and short term goals for each learner (Standard 4.1). Students are aware of their own actions and accomplishments as they progress from level to level (Standard 4.3).

3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practices have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.

Reading and writing of essential sight words can be quite challenging for young children because many words seen frequently in early reading and writing do not follow any typical phonetic rules or sound-letter relationships. These words are difficult to retain and apply despite being so common in early reading text. Children need strategies to help them learn to read and write these essential sight words because they appear so often in all kinds of text to which young readers are exposed. These strategies need to be such that the children can explore, experiment, and manipulate the difficult essential sight words with success on their own level and at their own pace in order to retain and use them in the world of reading and writing. The children involved in ICPR are children who run the entire spectrum of these educational needs. We have children entering first grade who do not recognize the letters of the alphabet and children who are reading on a third to fourth grade reading level. This program meets the needs of all of those learners.

During the 2000/2001 school year there were 56 children in the first grade ICPR Program. In September, only 3 (5%) of the 56 children tested on the "First Hundred Words" were reading on a first-grade independent level. A second assessment was completed in December, 2000. We found that by this time, 16 students (17%) were reading at an independent first-grade level. The final assessment was administered in June 2001. 67% of the students tested were reading at or above an independent first-grade level. The first grade teachers have truly embraced this program. The first grade teachers have found that the majority of students were being introduced to books in January that were typically selected in April.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

In order to replicate this practice, specialists and "others" must be made available each day for 30 minutes. Our "ICPR" staff include: two speech therapists, three special education teachers, two basic skills teachers, one enrichment teacher, one teacher assistant, and three first grade classroom teachers. They look forward to meeting their groups and are so proud of the students progress. We actually have other staff members asking if their schedules can be adjust so that they can participate as an ICPR staff member.

This team must have time to meet in order to common plan strategies, discuss student progress, realign groups and share materials.

Books, materials and supplies must be purchased. The materials being used in our program include: Little Readers, Early Success Levels I and II, Soar to Success, by Houghton-Mifflin, DLM-Developmental Learning Materials, Success with Sight Words by Creative Teaching Press, miscellaneous chapter books by various authors.

The first grade teachers must also make time in their schedule for their students to participate in the program.